

Message Text

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46

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 EUR-25 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 RSR-01

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R 141130Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY FREETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8622

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MONROVIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L FREETOWN 1384

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SL, GV

SUBJECT: PRESIDENT STEVENS RETURN TO SIERRA LEONE

REF FREETOWN 1368 STATE 157749

1. GLV WILLIAMS, SECRETARY TO PRESIDENT CALLED EMBASSY LATE
YESTERDAY TO CONVEY PRESIDENT'S PROFOUND GRATITUDE FOR MAY COURTESIES

EXTENDED HIM BY USG DURING UNSCHEDULED VISIT NEW YORK EN ROUTE HOME.
APOLOGIZING FOR SHORT NOTICE OF US STOPOVER, WILLIAMS SAID PRESIDENT
HAD INTENDED

TO FLY TO LONDON AUGUST 11 FROM OTTAWA AND THEN ON TO LAS PALMAS FOR
FIVE DAYS REST ON DOCTOR'S ORDERS. WHEN EMBOFF REPLIED THAT WE FULLY
UNDERSTOOD HOW PRESS OF STATE AFFAIRS CAN ALTER PLANS AT LAST MOMENT
AND USG PLEASED TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO ASSIST, WILLIAMS INTERJECTED
THAT STEVENS CHANGED PLANS FOR "STRATEGIC REASONS", ADDING THAT
ACTING PRESIDENT S.I. KOROMA HAD SENT MINISTER TO OTTAWA TO URGE
STEVENS IMMEDIATE RETURN FREETOWN.

2. COMMENT: WHILE GUINEAN "JITTERS" NOW APPEARS MOST LIKELY
REASON FOR STEVENS EARLY RETURN, EMBASSY SUSPECTS IT PROMPTED
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MORE BY STEVENS CONCERN THAT KOROMA MIGHT OVERACT TO RUMORED

COUP PLOTTING IN HIS ABSENCE, THAN BY REPORTS THEMSELVES.

3. GOSL PULLED OUT ALL STOPS TO GIVE STEVENS HERO'S WELCOME
ON RETURN AUGUST 12. IN BRIEF REMARKS AT STADIUM CEREMONY
PRESIDENT SAID HE WAS EXTREMELY GRATEFUL FOR WAY LAW AND ORDER HAD
BEEN KEPT IN COUNTRY DURING HIS ABSENCE. IN AN OBVIOUS BOW TO
THE PRESIDENT, P.M. KOROMA SAID "WHEN I SAT ON THAT HOT CHAIR
WHILE YOU WERE AWAY, I FOUND THAT YOUR JOB WAS TEN TIMES MORE
ONEROUS THAN MY OWN".
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